



NARCOTICS BUREAU

11515 S. COLIMA ROAD, WHITTIER 90604
(562) 946-7125

www.lasd.org

Press Release

Leroy D. Baca, Sheriff

Classification:	Marijuana Eradication Operation 11358 H&S; Cultivation of Marijuana	Incident Date:	July 23, 2010
Author/Date/Time:	Captain Ralph G. Ornelas, Narcotics Bureau	7/23/10	0600

Incident Location:	Angeles National Forest: Rincon Road, Water and Roberts Canyons, Azusa (San Dimas Station Area)
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Victim(s):	N/A	Suspect(s):	Unk
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Narrative:

Members of the Narcotics Bureau Marijuana Eradication Team (MET) and Aero Bureau, in a joint operation with members of the U.S. Forest Service, California Department of Fish and Game, California Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement, Campaign Against Marijuana Planting (CAMP), and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), performed an illicit marijuana eradication operation on public lands within the Angeles National Forest on July 23, 2010. The team simultaneously entered three mountainous canyons to investigate pre-identified, illicit Marijuana grows. Detectives found a series of 41 separate plots containing differing strains of illicit marijuana under cultivation. The sites included extensive irrigation systems and campsites. No suspects were located.

The team eradicated a total of 17,493 illicit marijuana plants from public lands, which had an estimated street value of nearly \$35 million dollars. They also removed 950 pounds of refuse,

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**Los Angeles County
Sheriff's Department**

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consisting of hazardous chemical fertilizers, pesticides, food, spraying equipment, propane tanks, and live ammunition from the forest. They repaired damage to three artificially-dammed streams and removed extensive irrigation systems which suspects used to divert water from native plants and animals to irrigate the illicit crops.

Television reporter Kristen Welker of NBC and print reporter Thomas Watkins of the Associate Press accompanied the team into the site bordering Rincon Road where they interviewed Detective Robert Wagner and Captain Ornelas. The Rincon Road planting was extensive and abutted a popular local fishing and hiking recreation area where a number of families were currently swimming and camping.

The public who visit remote nature areas should be cautious of the hazards posed by criminal marijuana farming. Suspects often use firearms and even booby traps to guard their plants from law enforcement and competing criminal elements. Additionally, many of the fertilizers and pesticides encountered in illicit farming operations are highly toxic to people and may contaminate nearby water sources. Some of these are banned in the United States.

Since May 2010, detectives have eradicated a total of 126,687 illicit marijuana plants from local public lands, with an estimated street value of over \$253 million dollars.

Anyone with information about this crime is encouraged to contact their local sheriff's station of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department or the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Narcotics Bureau at (562) 946-7125. If you prefer to provide information ANONYMOUSLY, you can call "Crime Stoppers" by dialing 800-222-TIPS (8477), texting the letters TIPLA plus your tip to CRIMES (274637), or using the website <http://lacrimestoppers.org>.